



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
|--|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 10/736,069 | 12/15/2003 | David Arthur Kuen | KCC 4972.1 (17,515B) | 4276 |
| 321 | 7590 | 08/28/2006 | EXAMINER | |
| SENNIGER POWERS ONE METROPOLITAN SQUARE 16TH FLOOR ST LOUIS, MO 63102 | | | HAND, MELANIE JO | |
| | | | ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
| | | | 3761 | |

DATE MAILED: 08/28/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/736,069

Applicant(s)

KUEN ET AL.

Examiner

Melanie J. Hand

Art Unit

3761

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 08 June 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-41 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed June 8, 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

With respect to applicant's argument that the previous Office action does not specify which element of the device renders the claimed waist belt unpatentable, Examiner has restated the rejection of claim 1 to clarify which element of the prior art of Rosch corresponds to said waist belt.

With respect to applicant's argument that Christoffel does not provide suggestion to combine, Examiner disagrees and refers applicant to the rejection of claim 1, where Examiner states that since, Christoffel teaches an absorbent pant and teaches hook and loop fasteners at the waist region that connect to another piece having complimentary fasteners at its waist regions. Christoffel teaches that the fasteners facilitate fast and easy removal of the absorbent pant. The fact that the other piece is a top or that it is disposable is immaterial. While the term disposable may appear to imply one-time use, such meaning is not guaranteed, therefore Examiner disagrees with applicant's assertion that the suit is used one time and then discarded. The existence of the releasable and reusable fasteners themselves is clear evidence of intent of repeated use of the top portion of the swimsuit. Christoffel does not teach, and Examiner has not implied, that the absorbent pant is reusable.

Examiner also disagrees with applicant's argument that there is no motivation to arrange the attachment of the pant structure to the trunk cover such that the attachment is releasable. The prior art of Christoffel clearly teaches that an absorbent structure can either be permanently attached to a top or outer garment at the waist region, or it can be refastenably attached.

Art Unit: 3761

Therefore, a releasable attachment mechanism is a suitable alternative to a permanent fastening system, and since the pant structure of Rosch is manufactured as a separate entity that is joined to the outer trunk at their respective waist regions, a releasable attachment mechanism taught by Christoffel is not only a possibility, it is a more desirable attachment means that a permanent one, as taught by Christoffel.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 1-11 and 13-41 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rosch et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,115,847) in view of Christoffel et al (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0087137).

With respect to **Claims 1-9,15,16,22,26-28,34-37,40**: Rosch teaches an active wear trunk garment 110 having a liquid-permeable trunk cover 114 having inner surface 111 and outer

Art Unit: 3761

surface 113 and a waste containment structure 142 comprising a liquid-impermeable backsheet 158 having a garment-facing surface, a liquid-permeable bodyside liner 156 and absorbent core 160 sandwiched therebetween. ('847, Col. 8, lines 8-16) Trunk cover 114 has front waist, rear waist and crotch regions 131, 133, 149 as can be seen in Figs. 1-4. Waist elastics 143, 145 (collectively, waist belt) are an integral portion of cover 114 in the waist regions 131 and 133 and that garment 110 is joined to said structures. As can also be seen in Figs. 1-4, waste containment structure 142 is disposed generally within trunk garment 110. Rosch teaches that trunk cover 114 is joined to elastic members 143, 145 at the waist regions ('847, Col. 10, lines 45-49), therefore Rosch does not teach that trunk cover 114 is releasably attached at the front and rear waist regions.

Christoffel teaches a girl's swimsuit wherein an absorbent pant/bottom portion 98 is releasably attached to the upper portion/bodice 42 at the front and rear waist areas via hook and loop fasteners 92 to secure the pant portion and upper portion about the waist of the wearer and for greater ease in applying and removing said swimsuit, ('137, ¶¶ 0071-0074) therefore it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize hook and loop fasteners to releasably attach the outer cover 114 and garment 110 taught by Rosch so as to more easily apply and remove garment 110 as taught by Christoffel.

With respect to **Claim 6**: Rosch teaches that waist elastics 143, 145 are an integral portion of cover 114 in the waist regions 131 and 133 and that garment 110 is joined to said structures. As can best be seen from Figs. 1-4, the garment 110 is joined in such a way as to be joined to the inner surface of a waist belt defined by said elastics, and cover 114 is joined to the outside of said elastic members.

Art Unit: 3761

With respect to **Claims 10,38,39,41**: Rosch teaches that waist elastic members 143,145 are bonded in a relaxed, untensioned state to outer cover 114 and subsequently garment 110. The resulting structure is then configured for wear.

With respect to **Claim 11**: Rosch teaches an elongation for the elastic material defining the side panels of garment 110 of between 50-300%. Since the elastic members 143, 145 are joined to the garment in a relaxed state, the elongation for the entire assembly in the waist region will be at least in this range.

With respect to **Claim 13**: Rosch teaches leg openings defined by seams 187,189 in cover 114. ('847, Col. 11, lines 1-5) As can best be seen in Fig. 4, garment 110 has leg openings spaced apart inwardly from leg openings defined by cover 114.

With respect to **Claim 14**: Rosch teaches leg elastics for the garment 110. Cover 114 is in the form of swimming trunks and as can best be seen in Fig.4 is designed to hang loosely about the legs of the wearer.

With respect to **Claims 17,21**: As can best be seen in Fig. 4, the crotch region of garment 110 is located inwardly of the crotch region 149 of cover 114 and not attached. Further, Rosch teaches cover 114 is configured as a pair of swimming trunks, wherein said trunks, as stated previously are intended to hang loosely about the legs of the wearer, whereas the garment contains leg elastics to fully encircle the legs of the wearer.

Art Unit: 3761

With respect to **Claims 18,19**: As can best be seen in Fig. 4, Rosch teaches that garment 110 has a waist opening defined by waist regions 131 and 133 correspondign to the waist regions of cover 114.

With respect to **Claim 20**: Rosch teaches pant structure 112. ('847, Col. 12, line 5)

With respect to **Claims 23,24**: Since Rosch teaches both non-refastenable and refastenable side seams ('847, Col. 11, lines 1-5, 14,15), though Rosch does not teach using them in combination, it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify said side seams so as to contain both refastenable and non-refastenable portions, for example having a non-refastenable portion located above fasteners 96 on each side seam.

With respect to **Claim 25**: Please see the rejection of claim 1 in addition to the following: Rosch teaches that cover 114 has front panel 115 and back panel 121 having side edges 117 and 119 (front) and 123 and 125 (back). ('847, Col. 10, lines 57-65)

With respect to **Claims 29-31**: Rosch teaches pant structure 112 having left and right side panels 126, 128 respectively that extend from the front waist region 120 to the rear waist region 122. ('847, Col. 12, lines 4-12) Panels 126,128 are ultrasonically bonded and have non-refastenable seams so as to allow fastening of a front side panel to a corresponding back side panel, thus defining leg openings, as can be seen in Figs. 5,6. ('847, Col. 12, lines 18-21) As can also be seen in Figs. 5 and 6 pant structure 112 has front and back panel areas in addition to the side panels.

With respect to **Claim 32,33**: Since Rosch teaches that the side panels are elastomeric and are capable of stretching to between 10-500% of their original length ('847, Col. 8, lines 55-60), Examiner is asserting that they are capable of creating an overlap in the range set forth by applicant in claim 33 (thus also falling within the range set forth in claim 32), in both the cases of non-refastenable and refastenable seams.

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rosch et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,115,847) in view of Christoffel et al (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0087137) as applied to claims 1-11 and 13-41 above, and further in view of Ronnberg et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,500,163).

With respect to **Claim 12**: Rosch does not teach a particular width for the waist elastics. Ronnberg teaches a waist belt for an absorbent garment having a width of 70-160 mm for an adult incontinence product, implicitly teaching that a lesser width would be suitable for a smaller user, therefore it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the garment 110 taught by Rosch to have a width that is less than the range taught by Ronnberg to fit a smaller user, e.g. an infant.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within

Art Unit: 3761

TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Melanie J. Hand whose telephone number is 571-272-6464. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs 8:00-5:30, alternate Fridays 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tatyana Zalukaeva can be reached on 571-272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3761

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Melanie J Hand
Examiner
Art Unit 3761

MJH

TATYANA ZALUKAEVA
SUPERVISORY PRIMARY EXAMINER

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tatyana', written over the printed name and title.